

HAMNET BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY 10 AUGUST 2003

HAMNET is the Official Emergency Communications network of the South African Radio League and provides emergency communication to local, regional and national authorities, when requested to do so.

THIS BULLETIN WAS COMPILED AND PREPARED BY FRANCOIS BOTHA - ZS6BUU.

IN THE BULLETIN TODAY:-

BULLETINS AROUND THE COUNTRY THE SOLOMON ISLANDS - RE-VISITED Y2K SCENARIO RE-ENACTED - FOR ANOTHER REASON INTERNET AT 33,000 FEET SECURITY AT HOME AMATEUR RADIO ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

HAMNET BULLETINS AROUND THE COUNTRY

KZN - Sunday morning at 07H00 on their local VHF repeaters with a relay on 7.070MHz

National Bulletin at 17H00 local on 10,130Mhz in the 30M band with a relay on 7.070Mhz, but currently being read at 16H30 due to propagation problems in winter.

North West Province have a club bulletin on Mondays, which includes a Hamnet segment at 19H00 local on 3,750Mhz in the 80M band as well as their local repeater on 145.737.5Mhz.

Gauteng North on Tuesdays at 20:30. The frequencies are 145,725MHz and either on 7,070MHz in the 40M band or 3,695MHz in the 80M band.

Hamnet Western Cape Province with a bulletin on Wednesdays at 20H30 local on 145.700MHz, relayed on 3,674MHz.

The HAMNET Bulletin is sent to all those of whom I have an e-mail address and also sent out on packet by Rudi, ZS6DX.

THE SOLOMON ISLANDS - REVISITED

Twice this year the Solomon Islands have been in the news due to cyclones and tropical storms, which caused severe disruption and displaced many families.

The same Islands have been in the news again, but for a different reason. Sending amateur radio operators out to a lonely Island to help and assist in emergency communications can unfortunately also have a down side.

Armed supporters of a militant leader in the Solomon Islands recently attacked and burned two villages, driving hundreds of people from their homes and tearing down a radio station put up by foreign ham radio volunteers. The incident took place on June 20th as fighters loyal to Harold Keke raided two villages in a remote area of the Island.

According to published reports, this was just the latest in an upsurge of violence on the Solomon's Main Island of Guadalcanal that has left dozens dead and homeless.

As you can see, rendering emergency communication can sometimes have unfortunate results.

Y2K SCENARIO RE-ENACTED - FOR ANOTHER REASON

With credit to an item taken from the ARRL Website, preparations for the Y2K scenario at the turn of the century, has had a very interesting after effect.

On July the 16th, a lightening strike took out the telephone service in the City of Trenton, Missouri. Grundy County ARES Emergency Coordinator Glen Briggs, KB0RPJ, said hams immediately made themselves available in Trenton and some surrounding towns to provide communication.

Lacking a formal plan to deal with such an occurrence, Briggs said that ARES team fell back on plans developed prior to Y2K with St Luke's Health System in Kansas City, which manages Wright Memorial Hospital in Trenton.

This plan called for operators to go to the hospital and check in with the authorities and find out what types of communications were needed. Although 911 and cellular service remained up for most of the time, the hospital was unable to contact one specific physician.

ARES members then stood by to ensure that they were able to contact him and if necessary, operators were ready to drive to his home and collect him.

Hams then made contact with other critical institutions in Trenton to ensure that they had some sort of communication, and if not, were in a position to set up an emergency communications unit at each site where there was a break in communication. They concentrated on hospitals and nursing homes.

Through the night, Briggs maintained contact with the various units now spread out across the city, to ensure a smooth running of events.

After a long nap the next day and when telephones were back in service, Briggs followed up with city and hospital officials. The city administrator was delighted in our response and we talked for nearly a half an hour on how to handle similar events in the future.

The hospitals and nursing homes also thanked the hams for their prompt response and being able to set up an emergency network in such a short time.

In all, 10 ARES members participated in this event.

INTERNET AT 33,000 FEET

Several international airline carriers will begin offering high-speed Internet access via satellite this year.

Connexion Inc. is one of the service providers. Its system requires installing two antennas on the aircraft. A server and routing system inside the plane relay signals to plug-in ports at the seats or wireless networking cards in passengers' laptops.

The first tests are scheduled for this summer on flights from Frankfurt in Germany to Washington DC. The service includes word-wide e-mail facilities and instant messages from their seats.

I wonder if they will provide for Echo-link and IRLP communication for the amateur radio operator?

SECURITY AT HOME

This next item has nothing to do with emergency communication, but because we drive vehicles equipped with rather expensive equipment and do not wish to fall prey to a hijack; the following should be kept in mind. The same applies to our loved ones, especially lady drivers arriving or leaving home.

Driveway robberies have shown a marked increase in some of the larger cities, especially here in Johannesburg and on the Reef. Please consider the following when leaving or arriving home.

- Check your driveway and street before you leave or enter.
- Ensure driveway well lit and clear of shrubbery where criminals can hide at night.
- Be aware of strangers loitering near your home. Pass and return later.
- Get to know your neighbours.
- Be aware of occupied cars near home. Casing the joint?
- Be alert when your animals do not welcome you home as per normal.
- If in doubt, phone home to ensure driveway is clear or switch on lights if not on when arriving home at night.
- If you have to open a gate, switch off motor but leave key in ignition and close the door.
- If there are children in the car, take keys with you. It could become a bargaining tool if a hijacker wants your vehicle.
- If children are older, get out of car with you.
- Before parking, check rear view mirror to ensure you are not being followed. If you are suspicious that you are being followed, drive around the block or to the nearest Police station.
- When getting out of vehicle, be aware of surroundings.
- Never sit in a parked car without being aware of surroundings. Never sleep in a parked vehicle.

There may be other items you may wish to add to the above list. We should, however, become far more aware of what is going on around us when leaving or arriving home. Your life could depend on your observations.

AMATEUR RADIO ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Acknowledgement that Amateur Radio, in particular amateurs involved in emergency communications, has had quite a significant boost from the Governor of California, in the United States.

With acknowledgement to an item downloaded from QRZ.Com, Governor Davis, who represents California, signed legislation today. 15 July 2003 that would ensure that amateur radio stations' communication will not be obstructed by any city or country ordinance.

Due to the wide number of volunteers who utilize their amateur radio licences during times of natural disasters or emergency situations, maintaining amateur radio stations' ability to broadcast is an important resource to security and rescue aid.

Well-done Sir, and South African authorities, please take note!

Bulletin ends.